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ABSTRACT

A district-wide language arts program for kindergarten through grade eight that emphasizes aesthetic expression in addition to a basic skills component is described in this booklet. The booklet also presents a statement of the goals of the school district's board of education, a list of overall program goals, and information on general program applications, such as the use of language arts and reading labs, electives for grades seven and eight, a developmental composition program, and the development of film viewing skills. The major portion of the booklet describes the specific language arts programs for kindergarten through grade two, grades three and four, and grades five and six; ungraded English for speakers of other languages; and English for grade seven and for grade eight. Each program description includes a list of specific behavioral objectives. (AEA)

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PROGRAM OF STUDIES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, K-8

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Department of Instructional Planning and Development
Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

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The Goals of Education

Adopted by the Board of Education — February 12, 1973

The goals of education for the Montgomery County Public Schools are set forth in this statement of public policy to guide the school system in developing, implementing, and improving educational programs for its students. This statement outlines those goals considered by the citizens of the county as most important for the education of their children in public schools and for which the citizens will hold the school system responsible and accountable.

The school system has the primary responsibility for some of these goals. For others, it shares that responsibility with the home and other community institutions.

The extent to which these goals can be realized will depend upon the endorsement by and continuing commitment of the school system staff, students, parents, and the community. With broad endorsement and wide support, the Montgomery County Public Schools will continue its development to serve its students and community in the most effective way possible.

Education is a process that encompasses the total experiences of each individual throughout a lifetime of formal and informal learning. The school program, as a keystone in this process, should provide opportunities and encouragement for students to acquire knowledge, to explore ideas, to ask questions, and to seek answers that will lead to sound and useful conclusions.

The probability of success motivates students to learn. Each school must create a program and maintain a climate in which every student has opportunities for success. Each individual is unique, and the school shall encourage that uniqueness. The school should help the student understand his [/her] values and the values of others.

The school program, while developing the skills of learning, should be based on the study of broad human concerns, flexible enough to deal with changing concerns and at the same time related to the needs, interests, and concerns of each student. The program should offer opportunities for decision-making. It should help the student develop the capacity to learn throughout his [/her] lifetime, to respond to and understand other human beings, and to accept full responsibility for the results of his [/her] actions.

Therefore, the Montgomery County Public Schools dedicates itself to provide the opportunity, encouragement, and guidance to make it possible for every child to attain the following goals of education:

ACADEMIC SKILLS

The fundamental responsibility of the school is to develop programs that enable each child to acquire those skills basic to all learning. The achievement of all other goals depends upon the success of the school in ensuring that each student, according to his [/her] own abilities, attain the following basic skills:

- **Reading:** The ability to read and comprehend written material and relate it to other knowledge
- **Composition:** The ability to write with precision, clarity, and acceptable usage, whether to inform, inspire, or persuade
- **Listening and Speaking:** The ability to listen attentively and with understanding and to speak with confidence and effectiveness, whether from written material or extemporaneously
- **Mathematics:** The ability to perform computations, to solve common problems of mathematics and logic, and to understand the structure of mathematics so it can be a useful tool in daily living
- **Study:** The development of basic study skills so that he [/she] may acquire knowledge efficiently
- **The Arts:** The development of some of the basic disciplines and skills in the performing and creative arts to be used throughout his [/her] life for communication, expression, and enjoyment
- **Observation:** The ability to identify and differentiate elements of the world around him [/her] as they are useful in personal, academic, and artistic pursuits

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Each person matures physically at a different rate and possesses differing capabilities. The school has the obligation to help each student:

- understand the biological functioning of his [/her] body
- make the best both of physical talents and limitations
- develop good health habits, skills, and interests to maintain his [/her] body in optimum condition throughout his [/her] lifetime

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to acquiring academic skills, each individual should develop his [/her] intellectual capabilities to the fullest extent possible. Therefore, the school will encourage each pupil:

- to think creatively
- to reason logically
- to apply knowledge usefully
- to deal with abstract concepts
- to solve problems

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Every person must learn to live in a society. The school must help each student develop an understanding of [people] and of how the individual depends upon others and they on him [/her]. This requires that each student gain:

- knowledge of himself [/herself] and the characteristics, needs, and desires he [/she] shares with others
- sensitivity to others and their ideas, and the ability to act responsibly in various situations
- the ability to function productively as a member of a group
- familiarity with the legal, moral, ethical, and cultural heritages of his [/her] and other societies
- knowledge of the various political systems and philosophies of the world

SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING

[We] must exist in the natural world. The school must help each student understand nature's impact on [us] and [our] impact on nature. This requires that each student gain:

- knowledge of natural phenomena and their effect on [people]
- understanding of scientific advances and their part in modern technology
- understanding of the scientific method
- appreciation of the ways in which the application of scientific principles can improve the quality of life while preserving the natural order

AESTHETIC EXPRESSION

[We], to realize [our] full potential, must be able to sense and appreciate beauty in the world around [us], whether created by nature or by [people]. The school must help each student gain:

- knowledge of the nature of the creative performing arts
- experience with a wide variety of art forms
- a perspective for developing his [/her] own aesthetic criteria and tastes
- understanding of the contribution of the arts to human communication

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Productive and satisfying work enriches [our lives]; and with increasing leisure time, many people will use various occupational skills for avocational purposes as well. The school must help each student gain:

- knowledge and appreciation of the wide variety and interrelationships of occupations in modern society
- opportunities to explore potential occupations in relation to personal aptitudes and interests, unrestricted by stereotypes of sex, race, or socio-economic level
- the knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable him [/her] to secure satisfying employment, embark upon further training and education in a chosen career field, and adapt occupational talents to changing job demands and opportunities

COMMITMENTS

The Board of Education and the staff of the Montgomery County Public Schools must create and maintain an educational environment that promotes the attainment of these goals by all students. Toward this end, therefore, the public schools make the following commitments to the citizens of Montgomery County:

- *To attract and retain the most qualified and best trained staff possible through dynamic programs of recruitment, supervision, and continuing in-service training and staff development opportunities*
- *To develop and implement a comprehensive and flexible instructional program to achieve the aforementioned goals and to provide the facilities, materials, and equipment needed to enhance the effectiveness of the program*
- *To evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional program continuously, and regularly report the findings to students, parents, staff, and the community*
- *To adopt new and different approaches when it is determined that they will contribute more effectively to the fulfillment of the goals*
- *To encourage a continuing dialogue with the entire community, making every effort to communicate needs and achievements, and to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the school community*
- *To utilize facilities and staff, in cooperation with other agencies, in the development of preschool, community school, and adult education programs that will meet the continuing educational needs of all citizens*
- *To provide an accountability procedure for informing county citizens of the objectives and costs of their school system and of reporting periodically on the educational investments made with their tax dollars*

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES K-8

POINT OF VIEW

Language is basic to all that we do. It is the unique tool by which we classify, interrelate, integrate, and reflect upon the diverse elements of our experience. It should not be surprising, then, that the MCPS English language arts program responds directly to several specific areas of the Goals of Education.* In the area of academic skills, it assumes a major role in ensuring that each student, according to his/her unique capabilities, attains:

The ability to read and comprehend written material and relate it to other knowledge
The ability to write with precision, clarity, and acceptable usage, whether to inform, inspire, or persuade
The ability to listen attentively and with understanding and to speak with confidence and effectiveness, whether from written material or extemporaneously
The development of some of the basic disciplines and skills in the performing and creative arts to be used throughout his [/her] life for communication, expression, and enjoyment

In addition, the program makes unique contributions in other MCPS goal areas, especially in that of aesthetic expression, where it seeks to help each student gain:

Knowledge of the nature of the creative and performing arts
Experience with a variety of art forms
A perspective for developing his [/her] own aesthetic criteria and tastes
Understanding of the contribution of the arts to human communication

Clearly, proficiency in the basic language arts skills contributes to achievement in all content areas, both in school and out. Upon it depend, in large part, a person's self-confidence; ease in social situations; and vocational, economic, and civic competence. But the English language arts program reaches beyond the basic skills component. In literature, through the medium of language, a person is enabled, whether as writer or reader, to order the elements of experience and to share with others insights into the human condition. Both for its practical and for its humanizing value, therefore, the study of English language arts is vital to the total educational program and significantly, it is the one subject required of all students from Kindergarten through Grade 12. In the upper grades, through a wide range of electives and English-related activities like debate, forensics, publications, and drama production, students are encouraged to develop and extend their specific potentials in the language arts area.

The goals of the K-12 English language arts program are to help the student to:

Become aware of the values, skills, attitudes, understandings, and appreciations necessary to living effectively in a democratic society

Think clearly

Develop competence in the skills of oral and written communication

Exercise personal responsibility in the use of language

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*Adopted February 12, 1973 by the Board of Education of Montgomery County, Maryland

Read efficiently and effectively for a variety of purposes

Appreciate the literary heritage and the relation of literature to the other arts

Develop insight in interpreting human experience

Develop increasingly mature standards of personal enjoyment and aesthetic taste.

Understand the relationship of words to human behavior

Develop power in creative thought and expression

Make appropriate use of the mass modes of communication

Listen purposefully and courteously

Develop effective habits of work and study

Develop intellectual curiosity

GENERAL INFORMATION

In the elementary school, basic language skills are developed in all the subject content activities in which the child engages. In addition, a period of time is devoted daily to systematic instruction in specific language skills; to the efficient and effective use of the library; and to the enjoyment of literature. Students also use specially designed labs that provide numerous opportunities for individualized instruction in language arts and reading.

At the middle and junior high school levels, students spend the equivalent of one full period per day in English study. As staff and scheduling permit, students in Grades 7 and 8 are offered additional elective courses or units of study in reading and study skills, communications media, creative writing, and other activities in English language arts.

In-school study of language and the basic language skills begins with experiences aimed at expanding each child's oral vocabulary, extending mastery of the basic sentence patterns, and improving usage habits. Formal instruction in the nature, function, history, and structure (grammar) of language is stressed in Grades 7 and 8. At all grade levels, language instruction is an integral part of the literature and composition programs. Teachers emphasize the strengthening of skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and in the related areas of usage and mechanics.

Children learn manuscript writing; then they proceed to cursive writing. Standards of legibility and neatness are stressed; and practice on letter formation, size, slant, and speed is provided as needed. Handwriting is taught throughout the elementary grades. To middle and junior high school students with difficulties in handwriting, remedial instruction is available through their English classes or through other classes held before or after school.

The K-8 composition program follows a natural developmental sequence. The child's first experience with story writing is through dictation. Gradually as handwriting, reading, and spelling skills are developed, the child is able to assume responsibility for the writing. At the elementary level, composition experiences emphasize fluency in writing and encompass personal and imaginative as well as functional writing. At the middle and junior high school levels, primary emphasis is on descriptive and narrative writing, with special attention paid to the writing of unified and coherent paragraphs.

Many of the best creative efforts growing out of class work are printed in school literary magazines and newspapers. An integral part of the English program at all grade levels is continued attention to spelling and the mechanics and effectiveness of expression. In Grades 7 and 8, approximately half of the instructional time in English is devoted to the study of language, composition, and the mechanics of English.

Reading instruction, using a combination of methods and materials, takes place at all grade levels from Kindergarten through Grade 12. Reading proficiency is so vital to the development of general competence that teachers at all grade levels and in all subject fields bear responsibility for developing the reading-study skills proper to their respective fields. The bulk of reading instruction in Grades 7 and 8 is concentrated on the development of the skills of interpretive and critical reading as applied to fiction, non-fiction, and the mass media. To students with special reading difficulties, specialized reading and diagnostic services are available. (NOTE: Separate volumes on the Reading Program K-8 and the Reading Program 9-12 have been included in the *Program of Studies.*)

Literature study is an essential feature of the entire English program. Its aim throughout is the development of persons who read with facility, pleasure, power, and discrimination. In the lower grades, children listen to and discuss representative selections read aloud by their teachers. As their decoding skills develop, students have group experiences in reading and discussing literature of various kinds, including fantasies, fairy tales, folk tales, myths, legends, adventure stories, and verse. To these are added individualized programs of independent reading guided by classroom teachers and librarians and characterized by informal teacher-student conferences. The cardinal objectives throughout the elementary years are the nurturing of a love for reading and a grounding in the basic reading skills. In the middle school/junior high school years, the literature program is transitional. The overriding purpose continues to be the nurturing of the habit of reading for enjoyment; but there is also the first concentrated focus on the basic tool concepts of literature applied to a limited number of established literary works appropriate to the interests and emotional maturity of early adolescence.

If a student is assigned a literature selection which he/she or his/her parent(s) find offensive, the teacher will, upon written request, provide an alternative assignment appropriate to the instructional objective(s) being pursued. In no way shall the student be penalized for requesting an alternative assignment.

A skill of increasing importance today may be identified as viewing. Though not properly a language skill, viewing, when considered in relation to filmic communication, has implications for the English teacher. More and more as the competence of teachers permits, students at both elementary and secondary levels are having experiences in filming, film editing, and film appreciation. Especially in the secondary grades, film study is becoming an important adjunct to literature and media study.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM — K-8

Grades K-2

The K-2 language arts program encourages the development of oral language facility through a variety of multi-sensory and multi-disciplinary experiences. Children are encouraged to touch, taste, smell, listen, and observe as they manipulate objects, use tools, work with finger paints and other art materials, experiment with musical instruments and their own voices, and take excursions and field trips. They are encouraged to talk about these experiences and to listen to other people express ideas in class discussions and other social situations. Through these oral language experiences, children develop vocabulary, learn acceptable usage, and expand their use of sentence patterns. Through listening experiences, they learn to discriminate, comprehend, and remember sounds. They also begin to listen for specific purposes such as to follow directions and to gain information needed to make decisions.

Fostering the habit of reading for both pleasure and information is a major aim of the K-2 program. In the early stages, children learn visual discrimination of objects, geometric shapes, pictorial representations, and letters of the alphabet. Systematically, through instruction in reading, they develop the skills necessary to reconstruct meanings from printed symbols. These reading skills include recognizing the written forms of familiar words (e.g., signs and labels); relating letter patterns to sound patterns; and using structural, contextual, syntactic, and typographic clues to decode printed matter. Reading personnel are available to assist classroom teachers in planning and implementing individual diagnosis and corrective help for children having difficulties.

Through their oral and listening language experiences, through studying pictures, through their reading, and through a planned literature program, children are aided in developing such cognitive skills as associating words with objects and ideas; noting details; perceiving relationships; making predictions; recognizing an idea stated in different terms; sequencing incidents; interpreting main ideas; and distinguishing between fantasy and reality. The literature program, which emphasizes oral reading of literature by the teacher, is designed also to encourage children to develop an appreciation of good literature, identify with characters in books, create mental images while reading, and develop an awareness of mood in stories. To become aware of poetic sound, rhythm, and imagery, children listen to and experiment with writing poetry.

Children are provided opportunities to express themselves creatively through dramatization and through imaginative writing. In the early stages of written expression, children are helped to compose stories, poems, letters, and invitations which they dictate to the teacher. When control of manuscript handwriting has been acquired, they write their own stories and poems. They are instructed in writing complete sentences and are made aware of the importance of correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage in their writing.

Preliminary to learning handwriting, children develop physical coordination through drawing, painting, and working with manipulative objects and through a variety of physical education activities. They are instructed in the proper formation of letters in manuscript writing and gain skill through functional writing experiences such as attaching labels and titles to their drawings. In the area of study skills, children become familiar with the various parts of a book. They learn to use a simplified dictionary and begin to alphabetize words. They learn to make use of the school's media center.

Upon completion of Grade 2, the child should be able to:

- understand ideas expressed orally by others
- follow simple directions given orally
- respond and react to oral language experiences
- express his/her feelings, beliefs, aspirations, observations, and experiences orally
- give simple directions orally
- identify and use correctly words common to the family, peer group, and classroom settings
- write with reasonable speed in manuscript form, using appropriate letter formations, spacing, and alignment
- write the names of the numerals 0 through 9 with proficiency
- recognize some similarities and some differences in manuscript and cursive letter forms
- use capital letters to begin proper nouns and initials
- use a capital letter to begin the first word of a sentence or a quotation
- use a period at the end of a statement or command and after abbreviations
- use a comma to separate day from year, city from state, and words in a series
- use the apostrophe to replace letters omitted in a contraction and to show possession in a singular noun
- spell one-syllable words, following different consonant and vowel patterns
- begin to spell words which contain digraphs
- spell plural nouns and some contractions

Grades 3 and 4

Through a variety of listening, speaking, reading, and writing experiences, children at this level expand vocabulary, continue to develop acceptable usage, and refine their skills in speaking before a group for various purposes.

In reading, children continue to develop independent word-recognition skills. Using knowledge of one-syllable word patterns, they decode words of more than one syllable. They further refine their skills in deriving meaning from the printed page through use of structural, contextual, syntactic, and typographic clues. Reading personnel are available to assist classroom teachers in the diagnosis and remediation of special reading problems.

At this level, the students begin to do some independent reading for the purpose of locating information in various content areas. Increased use of glossaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and reference books develops reference skills. Children become aware of the various parts of a newspaper. They have experiences in translating into verbal form information conveyed in simple maps, graphs, charts, and tables. Information gained from all of these sources is dealt with in various ways, both oral and written. Children learn to take brief notes and write coherent sentences. Through all of these language experiences, they further develop such cognitive skills as distinguishing main ideas and supporting details, recognizing sequences, drawing conclusions, and making judgments.

The program of fostering interest in the enjoyment of good literature is continued in these grades. As children's reading interests expand, they read animal stories, adventure and mystery tales, legends, fairy tales and myths, biographies, and poetry. Through continued experience with good literature, they gain insight into themselves and the world about them. They are encouraged to express their growing perceptions and insights through writing, dramatization, and painting.

When children demonstrate readiness, they are encouraged to make the transition from manuscript to cursive writing. While maintaining skill in manuscript writing for such activities as labeling, they are given instruction in cursive writing. Form, size, slant, spacing, and alignment are emphasized. Composition skills are expanded through such activities as writing friendly letters, invitations, descriptions, stories, and poems. Children gain greater skill in the use of capital letters, end punctuation, and the most common uses of the comma. They begin to proofread and edit their writing.

Upon completion of Grade 4, the student should be able to:

- listen purposefully and respond appropriately in discussions and conversations
- communicate in speaking or in writing the main points of an oral message
- secure simple information through listening to records, tapes, and cassettes
- tell stories or recount events orally in sequence
- give brief oral reports
- begin to use the telephone to convey messages and request information
- enjoy literature of various types (myths, legends, adventure and mystery stories, and poetry)
- write in cursive, demonstrating good form, slant, size, spacing, and alignment
- use manuscript writing as a supplementary skill
- use capital letters to begin titles, the names of geographic regions, names of languages, names of religious denominations, and political parties
- use punctuation correctly after initials in abbreviations and after coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences
- spell correctly words needed in his/her writing
- use a glossary and a dictionary to determine the meanings of words

Grades 5 and 6

While participating in oral discussions, students are guided in learning how to identify main ideas; select significant detail; determine a speaker's purpose; recognize misleading statements; demand evidence to support a point; note relationships among ideas presented; draw conclusions; and reserve judgment until many views have been expressed. They are encouraged to question, to make pertinent comments about what they hear, and to make a critical analysis of their listening skills. By improving the quality of their thinking and of their language use, students continue to increase their power to speak with clarity about increasingly complex ideas. Sentence variety and selection of words which name, describe, and express action and relationships exactly are emphasized. Poise, articulation, enunciation, and voice modulation are developed. Students learn to organize and present reports or explanations and begin to recognize their power to influence others through speech.

At the upper elementary level, most students have control of the various word-recognition skills and are able to read fluently material suitable to their maturity level. Their independent reading in social studies and science and their independent use of various reference materials are increasing. Instruction in reading is aimed at improving skill in such activities as locating and recalling specific information from a variety of sources; grasping total meanings; recognizing authors' purposes; predicting outcomes; determining relationships among ideas; and validating conclusions from internal evidence through the use of materials appropriate to their reading and emotional maturity level. Continued listening to and reading of good books and of good poetry encourages students to recognize character traits and story sequences, to appreciate figurative and other literary language, and to respond to appropriate literature.

By building on their previously acquired skills, students express ideas of increasing complexity in expanded sentence patterns, using proper word form, inflections, and agreements; use a more descriptive and vivid vocabulary; take notes from their reading and listening; learn to make simple outlines and summaries; strive for greater clarity in expression; and find personal pleasure in creative efforts.

Upon completion of Grade 6, the student should be able to:

- listen purposefully to student reports and discussion, films, recordings, and television programs
- follow oral instructions given personally, on tape, and over the telephone
- recognize the power of a speaker to influence others
- speak before a group, using organized notes if necessary, paying attention to articulation, enunciation, and voice projection
- use the telephone or tapes to communicate ideas
- write with proficiency in both manuscript and cursive forms
- use a glossary, dictionary, or thesaurus to determine appropriate use of words
- use appropriately capital letters to begin proper nouns (including the names of ethnic groups), important words in titles of reports, important words in the names of historical events, and proper adjectives
- use appropriately marks of punctuation as his/her writing requires, including end marks (period, question mark, exclamation point); marks within words (apostrophe, hyphen); internal marks (comma, colon); and special marks that set off materials (quotation marks)

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES — ELEMENTARY (ungraded)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is offered specifically for non-native speakers of English who are greatly impeded in their regular classroom work because they lack proficiency in the English language. The goal of the program is to provide adequate instruction so that each ESOL student will be able to function linguistically and culturally in his/her school. The audio-lingual approach which is used stresses listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ESOL teacher and the classroom teacher determine when the student no longer needs to participate in the ESOL program.

When students leave this course, they should be able to function successfully in their regular class work, although not necessarily at the level expected of the native speakers of English.

Description of Courses — Grades 7, 8

English — Grade 7
1001 1 year

In Grade 7, students receive the equivalent of a four-week introduction to the nature and use of language and the relationships that exist among the various fields of language study to be treated in succeeding years (e.g., semantics, grammar, etymology, and usage study). Also included in this introduction is a brief overview of the history of language in general and of English in particular.

Grammar study for the year is focused on the structure of the simple sentence, with special emphasis on four of the basic English sentence patterns; the parts of speech and their identifying characteristics; the functioning of word order in the English sentence; and the grammatical concepts of *predication, complementation, modification* (especially single-word modifiers), and *coordination* within the simple sentence.

On the basis of a systematic diagnosis of their understandings and skills in mechanics and usage, the students pursue a program designed to bring about needed improvements. The year's instruction covers the basic rules for capitalization, end punctuation, commas, and quotation marks adequate to everyday writing assignments, outlining, and simple social notes. In addition, students have guided practice in the effective use of the dictionary and of those library resources which are required for their class work. They also receive continuing instruction and practice in reading and interpreting informational materials related to their daily school program.

Seventh graders receive class instruction in the basics of oral communication, including sensitivity to and consideration for an audience, purposeful listening, and effective modulation and projection of voice. Classroom experiences include prepared oral readings, brief individual or group reports, and short speeches of introduction or demonstration.

In the twelve basic composition assignments at the seventh grade level, the students begin a sequence of guided writing experiences in choosing and limiting a topic, composing effective topic sentences, selecting specific and accurate words, and organizing significant details to support a topic sentence. They write sentence clusters and short paragraphs which record sensory impressions, narrate simple incidents, or explain simple processes. They also learn to draft simple, logical definitions as well as to write simple social notes. At all times, habits of neatness, courtesy of tone, and correctness of form are stressed. Students are required to proofread their work in order to eliminate errors in sentence sense, spelling, and punctuation.

Seventh graders are encouraged to continue to extend their reading for enjoyment. Through in-depth experience with the class study of the form and content of at least one junior novel and selected short narratives, students are introduced to the basic tool concepts of narrative: *plot, setting, character, conflict, theme, exposition, and method of narration*. Class study is followed up by guided small-group

or individual study of at least one additional junior novel. Students also receive a systematic introduction to mythology in which they explore the basic concept of *myth* — the probable origins of myth, its purposes, and the reasons for its perennial vitality.

Seventh graders are provided opportunities to discuss freely with the teacher and their peers their reactions to works read either as class assignments or for personal pleasure. They are encouraged to engage in written self-expression as occasions arise.

Upon completion of Grade 7, the student should be able to:

- compose simple descriptive or expository paragraphs characterized by topic sentences and supporting sentences, demonstrating the application of those concepts of grammar, usage, and mechanics studied for mastery at Grade 7
- draft informal social notes which are legible, neat, and courteous
- write intelligible accounts of simple narrative sequences
- adapt the pitch and volume of his/her voice and the rate of speech to the demands of social and class situations
- deliver with confidence a short informal speech of demonstration or introduction
- practice in class and in small-group conversations the basic courtesies of speech
- identify the main and supporting ideas in a short, clearly organized oral presentation
- develop logical topic outlines
- interpret and apply concepts of plot, setting, character, conflict, theme, exposition, and method of narration to myths, fables, and junior novels
- contrast myth and fable in form and purpose
- discuss and give examples of the extensiveness of mythological allusion in modern culture
- demonstrate a basic knowledge of the nature and history of language and of the fundamental areas of language study
- demonstrate practical understanding of the connotative power of words
- make effective use of the dictionary and other classroom and library references relevant to his/her needs
- recognize and compose simple sentences conforming to the English sentence patterns studied
- explain the characteristics and functions of the basic sentence elements
- edit his/her own work, applying the concepts of grammar, usage, and mechanics designated for mastery by the end of Grade 7

English — Grade 8
1002 1 year

In Grade 8, students receive the equivalent of a three-week introduction to semantics, geared to the development of the concepts of *abstract* vs. *concrete*, *symbol and referent*, *connotation and denotation*, and *fact* vs. *opinion* and to the practical application of these concepts in the analysis of propaganda at work in advertising. Developmental reading instruction at this grade level seeks to reinforce these learnings through concentration on the skills of critical reading.

After a preliminary review of the grammatical concepts developed through Grade 7, eighth graders receive systematic instruction in the remaining sentence patterns, the basic sentence transformations, and the concept of *coordination* as it applies to the clauses of compound sentences. Students extend their study of the parts of speech to include interrogative, demonstrative, and indefinite pronouns; the principal parts of regular verbs; and the recognition and use of auxiliaries.

On the basis of a systematic diagnosis of their understandings and skills in grammar, usage, and mechanics, students follow a program designed to reinforce the learnings designated for Grade 7 and to

extend these learnings as the development of new concepts and composition requirements indicates. There is continued emphasis on the application of the conventions of English usage and mechanics to their own writing and proofreading.

The twelve composition assignments specified for eighth grade place continued emphasis on composing topic sentences, on selecting supporting details, on gaining sensitivity to the multiple meanings of words, and on finding precise words to express one's meaning. In addition to writing short descriptions and narratives, students gain experience in distinguishing fact from opinion; in answering simple essay questions; and in writing letters of inquiry which are brief, clear, courteous in tone, and adhere to accepted forms.

Each eighth grader has an in-depth, full-class experience with the study of the form and content of at least one junior novel, designed to reinforce a grasp of the tool concepts taught in Grade 7 (with special emphasis on *character*), and a small-group and/or individual follow-up experience with at least one additional junior novel. Eighth grade classes complete a unit on American and/or selected world folklore, exploring the nature of folklore and the role of oral tradition in perpetuating values.

Opportunities are provided for students to discuss with the teacher and their peers works read individually or in small groups. Students participate in and evaluate varied types of oral class activities such as brief speeches to inform, simulated television programs, and dramatizations based on their reading.

Upon completion of Grade 8, the student should be able to:

- fill out fully, accurately, and legibly miscellaneous forms appropriate to the needs of home, school, and employment
- compose unified narrative and expository paragraphs, the latter characterized by strong topic sentences and coherently ordered details
- write a letter of inquiry which is substantially free of serious mechanical errors, conforms to accepted business letter form, and achieves its rhetorical purpose
- take notes identifying the main points of an oral or written presentation
- answer an essay question of fact or opinion in a unified, coherent paragraph
- cite and interpret examples of ways in which language is used to inform, to convince, and to direct
- explain briefly the relationship of language to reality, especially to the world of fact and the world of opinion
- demonstrate practical understanding of the symbolic nature of language, especially of the distinction between *denotation* and *connotation*
- distinguish between statement of *fact* and statement of *opinion*
- participate in and evaluate varied types of oral presentations
- recognize such stylistic features as sentence length, sentence structure, and sensory description
- describe and cite examples of the impact of folklore on historical and cultural heritage
- cite elements in folklore that are universal
- apply the tool concepts developed in the previous study of junior prose fiction to junior novels and other narrative forms
- discuss the concepts of *folklore* and *oral tradition* as well as some of the cultural values implicit in American folklore
- recognize and construct grammatical sentences in all of the seven basic sentence patterns
- construct effective compound sentences
- cite and differentiate the characteristics of the various parts of speech
- edit his/her own work, applying the concepts of grammar, usage, and mechanics designated for mastery by the end of Grade 8
- apply to speech those concepts of grammar and usage designated for mastery at Grade 8
- make effective use of classroom and library references relevant to his/her needs

English Skills Laboratory — Grades 7, 8

Not a course proper, this non-elective, non-credit, short-term English Skills Laboratory is designed for students who need concentrated individual or small-group help and practice in some aspect of English skills relating to reading, composition, language use, study and research, or vocabulary development. Students are referred to the laboratory by English teachers and may attend the laboratory in lieu of regular English or in addition to regular English, depending upon available staff and the individual student's schedule and needs. The laboratory is offered only at schools where facilities and staffing permit.

MCPS INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDES AND RELATED REFERENCES

The parenthesized letter following individual titles indicates where copies of the given material are available.

(w) Available from MCPS Warehouse, Division of Supply Management

(c) Available from appropriate coordinator, Department of Instructional Planning and Development

English Language Arts Literature Program K-12, Bulletin No. 185-1, Elementary Level, 1965. (w)

Speaking Skills Scope and Sequence Chart with Desired Behavioral Outcomes and Suggested Activities K-12, 1971. (w)

Scope and Sequence of Instructional Objectives for Skills in Mechanics of Written Expression, Revised Edition, 1975. (c)

Spelling Handbook K-12, Bulletin No. 181, Revised Edition, 1965. (w)

The Language Arts, A Curriculum Guide for Elementary Schools, 1956. (w) (This guide should be used only as a resource for ideas for student activities.)

Writing in the Elementary School, Bulletin No. 180, 1964. (w) (This bulletin should be used only as a reference for teachers.)

Teaching Reading Skills, Volume I, Bulletin No. 246, 1971. (w)

Comprehension — Critical Reading/Thinking Skills K-12, Volume II, Bulletin No. 246, 1974. (w)

English Language Arts Diagnostic Test Booklets in Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics, Grades 7-11, 1973. (w)

Structured Composition Program, Grades 7-12, Bulletin No. 154, Revised Edition, 1967. (w)

English Language Arts Literature Program K-12, Secondary Level — Junior High, 1966. (w)

English Language Arts Program K-12, Course of Study — Grade 10 Section, 1966. (w) (Composition component for the designated grade level not included. See Bulletin No. 154.)

English Language Arts Program K-12, Course of Study — Grade 11 Section, 1966. (w) (Composition component for the designated grade level not included. See Bulletin No. 154.)

English Language Arts Program K-12, Course of Study — Grade 12 Section, 1966. (w) (Composition component for the designated grade level not included. See Bulletin No. 154.)

Teachers' Resource Packet for the Basic Proficiency Program in Writing, Volumes I and II, 1976. (c)

Functional Reading Objectives Keyed to Reading Instructional Guides and Activities, Grades 5-6, Spring 1977. (c)

Prereading, Volume III, Bulletin No. 246, 1976. (w)

A Reading Program Guide for the Montgomery County Public Schools, K-12, 1979.

"Editing Standards for Middle/Junior High School Student Writing," 1977. (w)

"Characteristics of an Effective Secondary School Writing Program," 1977. (c)

"Instructional Objectives with Sample Assessment Tasks: Literature, Grades 7-9," 1973. (c)